



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forests
Forest Supervisor's Office
903 3rd Street, Kamiah, ID 83536
208-935-2513 (office)

File Code: 1950

Date: May 27, 2016

Chief James Allan
Chairman, Coeur d'Alene Tribal Council
PO Box 408
Plummer, ID 83851

Dear Chairman Allan:



We will be considering the enclosed project proposals and conducting environmental analyses on them in the near future.

You are being notified of these proposals because you have expressed interest in projects on the Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forests.

Preliminary assessments have been made that the following projects fall within a category of actions listed in 36 CFR 220.6, thereby excluding them from documentation in an Environmental Assessment (EA) or an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). Please feel free to offer your comments regarding them (see next page).

Thank you for your continued participation in projects involving the Nez Perce – Clearwater National Forests.

Sincerely,


CHERYL F. PROBERT
 Forest Supervisor

Nez Perce – Clearwater National Forests

Enclosures: Project Descriptions and Maps

Information Regarding Public Comments

Please review the following proposals and submit your site-specific comments, as described below, for inclusion in our analyses for the projects.

Comments should be submitted as an email attachment, in Word (preferred) or PDF format, to: comments-northern-nezperce@fs.fed.us.

If you choose to comment on the proposals, please include the following:

- (1) Your name, address, phone number, email address, and organization, if any;
- (2) Title of project; and,
- (3) Specific facts and relevant rationale you feel should be considered.

Comments received in response to this solicitation, including names, telephone numbers, addresses, and email addresses of those who comment, will be considered part of the public record and will be available for public inspection.

Comments submitted anonymously will be accepted and considered. Additionally, pursuant to 7 CFR 1.27(d), any person may request this Agency to withhold a submission from the public record by showing how the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) permits such confidentiality. The Forest Service will inform the requester of the Agency's decision regarding the request for confidentiality and the options available (see 7 CFR 1.27 for further information).

Please note that this opportunity for comment is primarily for you to make statements regarding why the project should or should not proceed as described below. If you have questions about any details regarding an individual project, we encourage you to please contact the project proponent, listed with each project on the pages below, to possibly get answers (including requests for more detailed project maps) before submitting your comments.

If you have any questions regarding comment submission, please contact Sheila Lehman, 208-935-4256 (work), 208-935-4275 (FAX); or, mail inquiries: Supervisor's Office, Nez Perce-Clearwater NFs, 903 3rd Street, Kamiah, ID, 83536.

Please submit your comments by June 27, 2016, for full consideration.

Project Proposals

1) Nat Brown Fencing (Palouse RD)

Proposed Category: 36 CFR 220.6(e)(9) Implementation or modification of minor management practices to improve allotment condition or animal distribution when an allotment management plan is not yet in place.

Legal Coordinates (Boise Meridian): Township 41 North, Range 1 West, Section 7

Background: Nat Brown Meadow is small and narrow with a portion of Nat Brown Creek running through the meadow. Bounded on all sides by hills, the area forms a natural corridor for animal movement. There are no current means to exclude livestock from most of the meadow, including a usually wet part of the floodplain. This makes it nearly impossible to keep livestock from grazing it past the time when utilization and streambank alteration indicators have been met or exceeded. The permittee has attempted to keep livestock from grazing the meadow at these times (herding, salting, protein supplements, etc.) and nothing has worked consistently. There are no livestock distribution or utilization concerns on the rest of the allotment, which consists mostly of transitory range. Part of the stream and meadow was fenced in 2013, and there has been no trouble with livestock breaking in there.

Project Design / Equipment: The Forest Service is proposing to extend the existing Nat Brown enclosure fence by approx. 1600' to include most of the meadow, which would add an additional 3.7 acres to the enclosure. Most of the materials would be recycled from the existing fence (see attached map). We are also proposing to construct a new small enclosure (approx. 1.10 acres, 1400' of fencing) in the riparian meadow opposite Forest Service Road 3327. Ground disturbance would consist of digging post holes for wood posts with a hand augur or small tracked augur and pounding T-posts. The tracked augur would only be used when the ground was dry and hard. The work would be done by the permittee or a contractor. Both enclosures would be grazed occasionally—for example, a few days in the fall—for forage plant health while keeping stubble height, utilization and streambank alteration to acceptable levels as described in the term permit and Annual Operating Plan. There would be no changes to designated access.

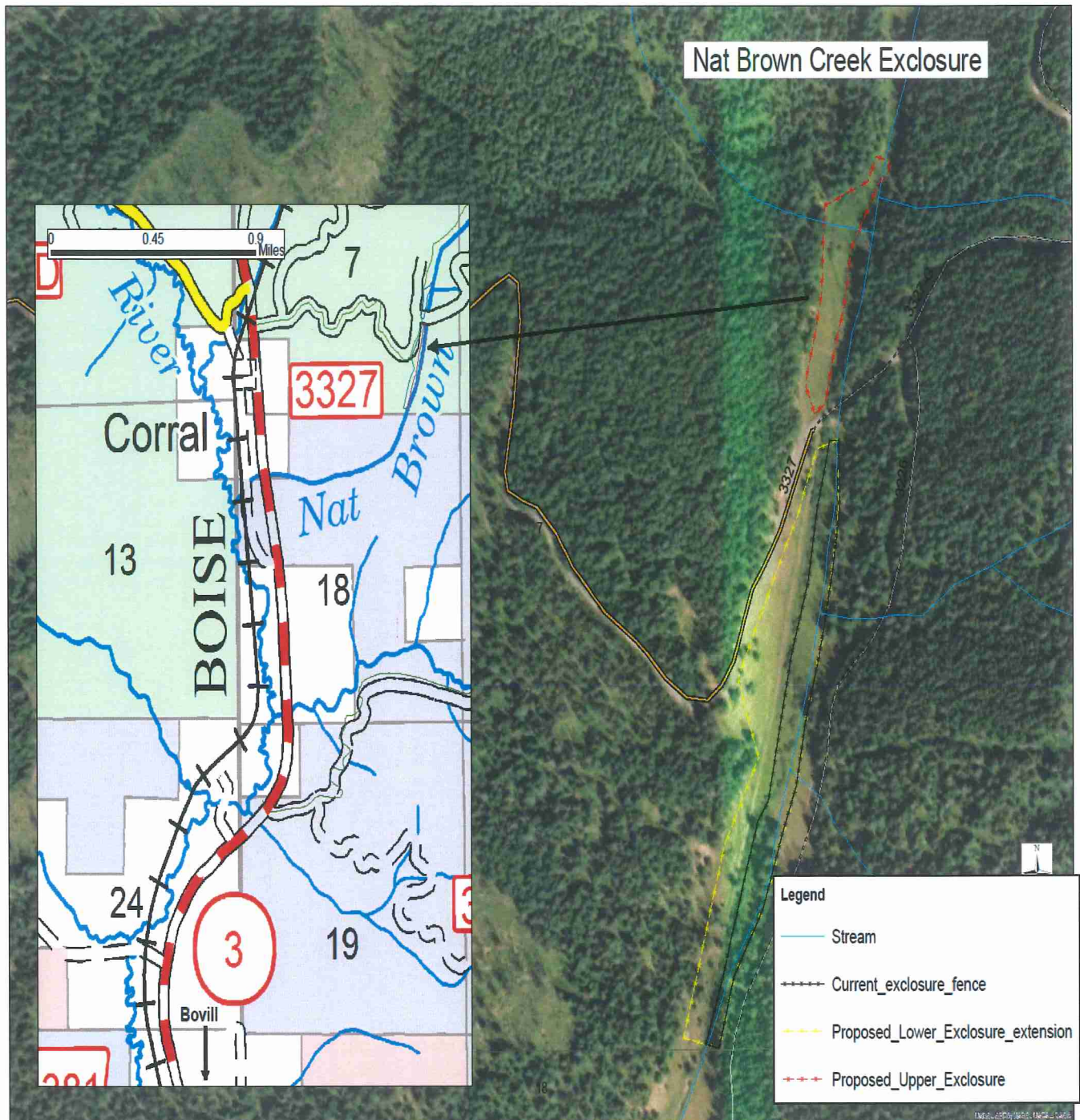
The project would have multiple benefits: (1) eliminate or vastly reduce impacts to the streambank and channel, allowing for improved riparian function over time; (2) reserve more forage within the enclosure and increase browse species for wildlife; and (3) reduced grazing pressure would allow native plants to compete more effectively with noxious weeds.

The south end of Nat Brown Meadow is under Idaho Department of Lands (IDL) ownership. IDL will be contacted to determine if they want to coordinate with the Forest Service and fence off their part of the meadow, which has the same issues.

Project Implementation: Work could begin in the summer of 2016 but more likely in spring/summer 2017, and would take a few days to a week.

Project Information: Katlyn Howisey, North Zone Range & Weeds Specialist, 208-875-1740, katlynmhowisey@fs.fed.us.

Map of the Nat Brown Fencing Project



2) *Potlatch River Boundary Fence Extension (Palouse RD)*

Proposed Category: 36 CFR 220.6(e)(9) Implementation or modification of minor management practices to improve allotment condition or animal distribution when an allotment management plan is not yet in place.

Legal Coordinates of Project Site: Township 42 North, Range 1 East, Section 32

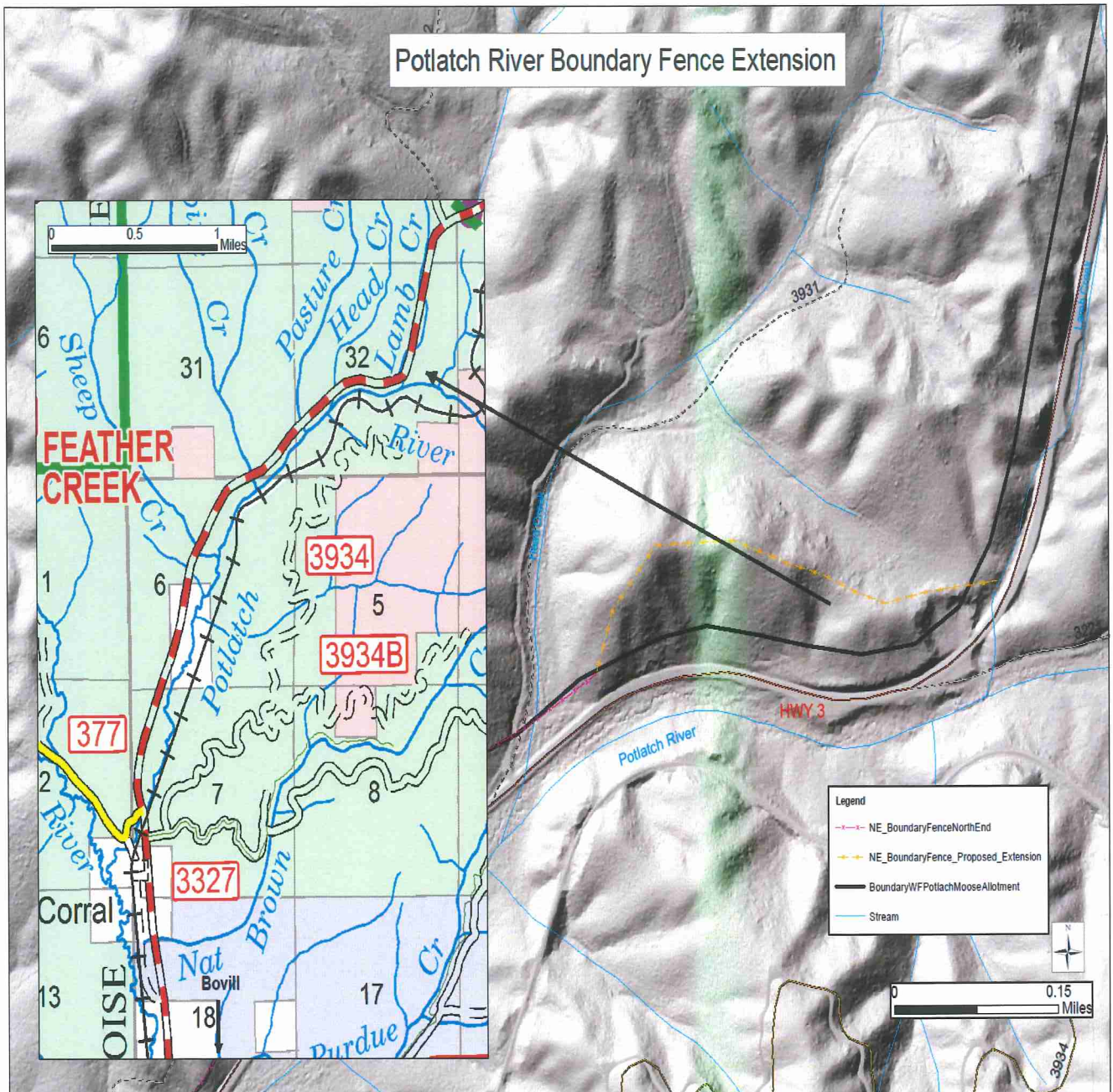
Background: The project is located on the Feather Creek Allotment, adjacent to Highway 3. The allotment boundary fence currently ends at a steep side hill. In the fall, when the pasture is in rotation, livestock can currently go around the fence and end up on the highway, where they can become a nuisance and a public safety hazard. In October, 2015 a logging truck hit two cows and jackknifed, blocking the highway for several hours.

Project Design / Equipment: To limit the possibility of livestock wandering onto Highway 3, the Forest Service is proposing to extend the existing boundary fence approximately 2100' (approx. 0.4 miles) along a dry ridgeline to tie in with the highway embankment. Ground disturbance would consist of pounding T-posts and digging post holes for wood posts with a hand held power augur or small tracked augur. ATVs may be used to transport fencing materials. All work would be done by the permittee.

Project Implementation: Work would begin either in the fall of 2016 or spring/summer of 2017 and take a few days to a week to complete.

Project Information: Katlyn Howisey, North Zone Range & Weeds Specialist, 208-875-1740, katlynmhowisey@fs.fed.us

Map for the Potlatch River Boundary Fence Extension Project



3) Lamb Creek Road Use Permit (Palouse RD)

Proposed Category: 36 CFR 220.6(e)(3) Approval, modification, or continuation of minor special uses of NFS lands that require less than five contiguous acres of land.

Legal Coordinates of Project Site: Township 42 North, Range 1 East, Section 29

Background: Potlatch Corporation is requesting the use of approx. 0.6 miles of National Forest System Roads (NFSR) 3933 and 3933-A to access their land at the National Forest boundary located at the end of NFSR 3933-A. Both roads are currently closed yearlong (gated on 3933) to all motorized vehicles. The closure is designated as S/W (soil and water). Both roads are aggregate surfaced roads in good condition, and would require minimal maintenance/road work prior to log haul. Forest Service Roads 3933 and 3933-A are considered the most economical route for Potlatch Corp. to access their land.

Project Design / Equipment: Potlatch Corporation proposes to use 0.3 miles of NFSR 3933 and 0.3 miles of 3933-A to access their land for a timber harvest scheduled for summer of 2016, with prescribed burning and tree planting to be conducted after the timber harvest. A 5-year Road Use Permit would be authorized that would allow Potlatch Corporation administrative and commercial use of the road by logging trucks and support vehicles during the closure period. The road would continue to be closed to all motorized vehicles.

The Potlatch Corporation would maintain the roads through roadside brush removal, culvert maintenance, ditch cleaning and road grading. Equipment such as a road grader, rubber tire backhoe and mechanical brusher would be used to accomplish road maintenance.

All road maintenance activities would be required to follow Forest Service Road Maintenance Specifications and Best Management Practices, which would be included in the road use permit. NFSR 3933 and 3933-A would be inspected by Forest Service personnel periodically to ensure road conditions were being maintained per the specifications in the road use permit.

Project Implementation: Timber harvest would start as early as summer of 2016, with planting completed by winter, 2021.

Project Information: David Ratliff, Forest Service Civil Engineer, 208-875-1718, dratliff@fs.fed.us

4) National Forest System Road 4716-A Road Easement (Palouse RD)

Proposed Category: 36 CFR 220.6(e)(7) Sale or exchange of land or interest in land and resources where resulting land uses remain essentially the same.

Legal Coordinates of Project Site: Township 43 North, Range 4 West, Section 18

Background: The State of Idaho, Department of Lands, (“Cooperator” or “State”) and the United States of America, by and through the Regional Foresters, Northern Region and Intermountain Region, USDA Forest Service, (“Government”) entered into a Road Right-of-Way Construction and Use Agreement and Cooperative Road Maintenance Agreement on January 13, 2003, hereafter referred to as the “State of Idaho / Forest Service Cost Share Agreement” or “Agreement” providing for the joint construction and use of roads in the State of Idaho and within and adjacent to the National Forests.

This project is located within the State of Idaho Agreement Area which includes the entire State of Idaho. The State of Idaho is requesting permanent access to their lands across National Forest System (NFS) lands on an existing road for the protection and management of their lands.

Idaho Department of Lands has been using National Forest System Road (NFSR) 4716-A for land management activities, including commercial timber haul, under 7700 Road Use Permits. The current permit expired in 2015.

Easement Details: The USA, USDA Forest Service, would grant an easement to the State of Idaho, Department of Lands, across NFS lands for the following existing road:

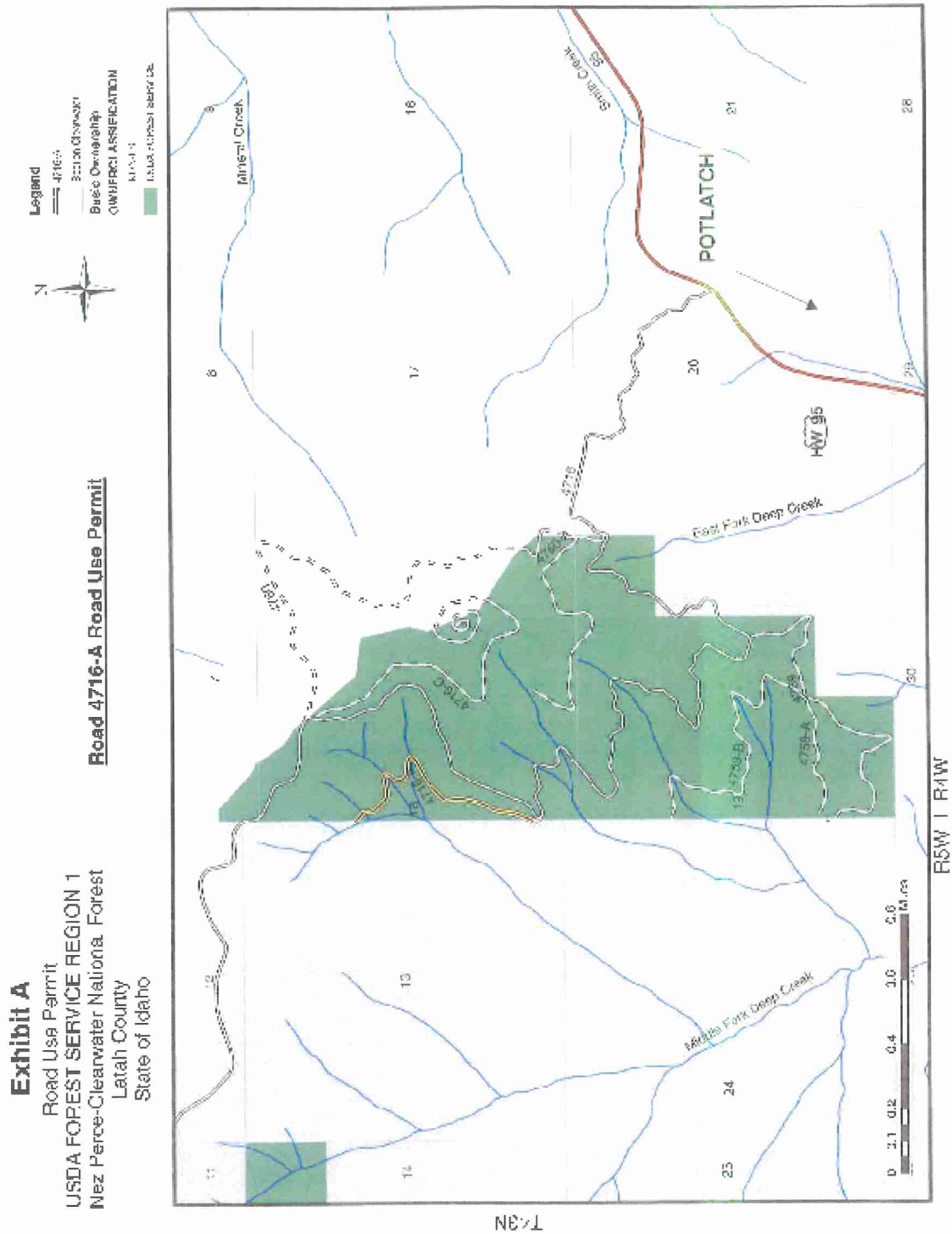
NFSR 4716-A (T43N, R4W, Sec. 18.) A gated, maintenance level 2 road (approximately 1.20 miles in length), closed to the public for full-sized vehicles yearlong but open to vehicles under 50”, e.g. ATVs, snowmobiles, etc.

Road maintenance activities such as roadside brush removal, ditch cleaning and road grading would be within the existing road template. Typical road use equipment such as a road grader, rubber tire backhoe and mechanical brusher may be used to maintain the road. The road was constructed for timber haul; log trucks and support vehicles would use the road, and there would be other vehicle use for post-harvest activities, such as burning and planting. The current public road closure to full-sized vehicles would remain the same. NFSR 4716-A would be inspected by Forest Service personnel periodically to ensure road conditions were being maintained per the specifications in the easement.

The easement would be managed under the State of Idaho / USDA Forest Service Cooperative Road Maintenance Agreement (2003) and under the terms and conditions of the easement granted. The State would continue to pay or perform road maintenance commensurate with their use as they would under a Road Use Permit. By granting road easements, the Forest Service would not have to process Road Use Permits. Work to complete a Fact Sheet and Supplement for this project would begin as soon as the project is approved.

Project Information: David Ratliff, Forest Service Civil Engineer, 208-875-1718, dratliff@fs.fed.us

Map of the NFSR 4716-A Road Use Permit Project



5) National Forest System Roads 5216E and 5216E-1 Road Use Permit (North Fork RD)

Proposed Category: 36 CFR 220.6(e)(3) Approval, modification, or continuation of minor special uses of NFS lands that require less than five contiguous acres of land.

Legal Coordinates of Project Site: Township 37 North, Range 6 East, Section 25

Background: The Idaho Department of Lands (IDL) is requesting the use of NFSR 5216-E (0.1 miles) and 5216-E1 (0.2 miles) to access State land at the National Forest boundary located at the end of the 5216-E1. Both roads are native surface ridge top roads with no water crossings, and have yearlong closures to motorized vehicles (open seasonally to snowmobiles) for soil and water.

Project Design / Equipment: IDL is requesting use of NFSR 5216-E and 5216-E1 to access State land for a timber harvest scheduled for summer 2016 with prescribed burning and tree planting to be completed after the timber harvest. A 5-year Road Use Permit would be authorized that would allow the IDL administrative and commercial use of the roads by logging trucks and support vehicles. The road would continue to be closed to full sized motorized vehicles.

IDL would maintain the road through roadside brush removal, culvert maintenance, ditch cleaning and road grading. Equipment such as a road grader, rubber tire backhoe and mechanical brusher would be used to accomplish road maintenance. All road maintenance activities would be required to follow Forest Service Road Maintenance Specifications and Best Management Practices, which would be included in the road use permit. NFSR 5216-E and 5216-E1 would be inspected by Forest Service personnel periodically to ensure road conditions were being maintained per the specifications in the road use permit.

Project Implementation: Timber harvest would start as early as summer of 2016, with planting completed by winter, 2021.

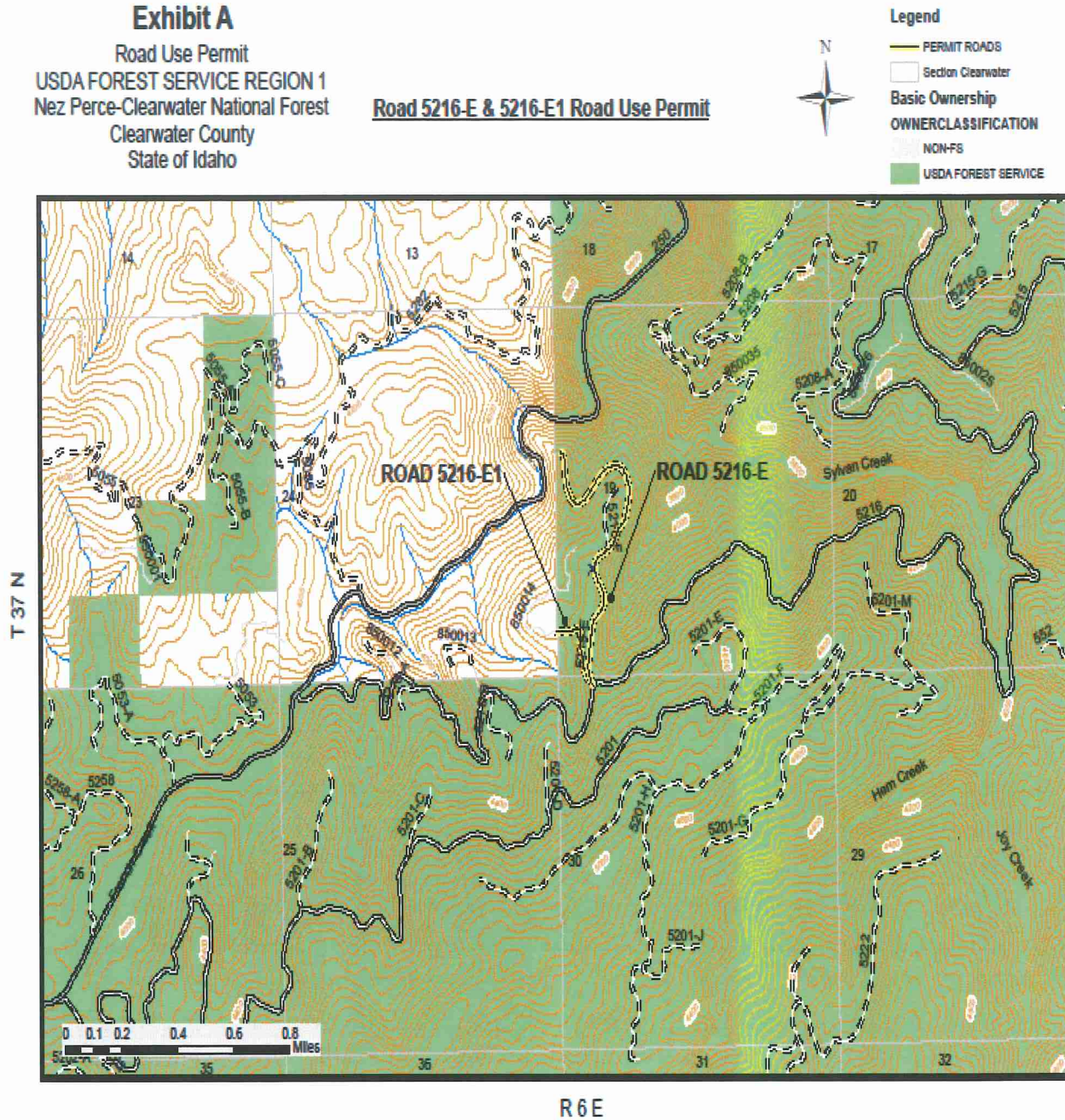
Project Information: Travis Mechling, North Zone Engineer, (208) 476-8210, tmechling@fs.fed.us

Map of the NFSR 5216E and 5216E-1 Road Use Permit Project

Exhibit A

Road Use Permit
USDA FOREST SERVICE REGION 1
Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forest
Clearwater County
State of Idaho

Road 5216-E & 5216-E1 Road Use Permit



6) National Forest System Roads 5326 and 5326-A Road Use Permit (North Fork RD)

Proposed Category: 36 CFR 220.6(e)(15) Issuance of a new special use authorization for a new term to replace an existing or expired special use authorization when the only changes are administrative, there are not changes to the authorized facilities or increases in the scope or intensity of authorized activities, and the applicant or holder is in full compliance with the terms and conditions of the special use authorization.

Legal Coordinates of Project Site: Township 40 North, Range 7 East, Section 19

Background: The Idaho Department of Lands (IDL) is requesting the use of NFSR 5326 (1.25 miles) and 5326-A (0.15 miles) to access State land at the National Forest boundary located at the end of the 5326-A. Both roads are native surface roads, and have yearlong closures to motorized vehicles for soil and water.

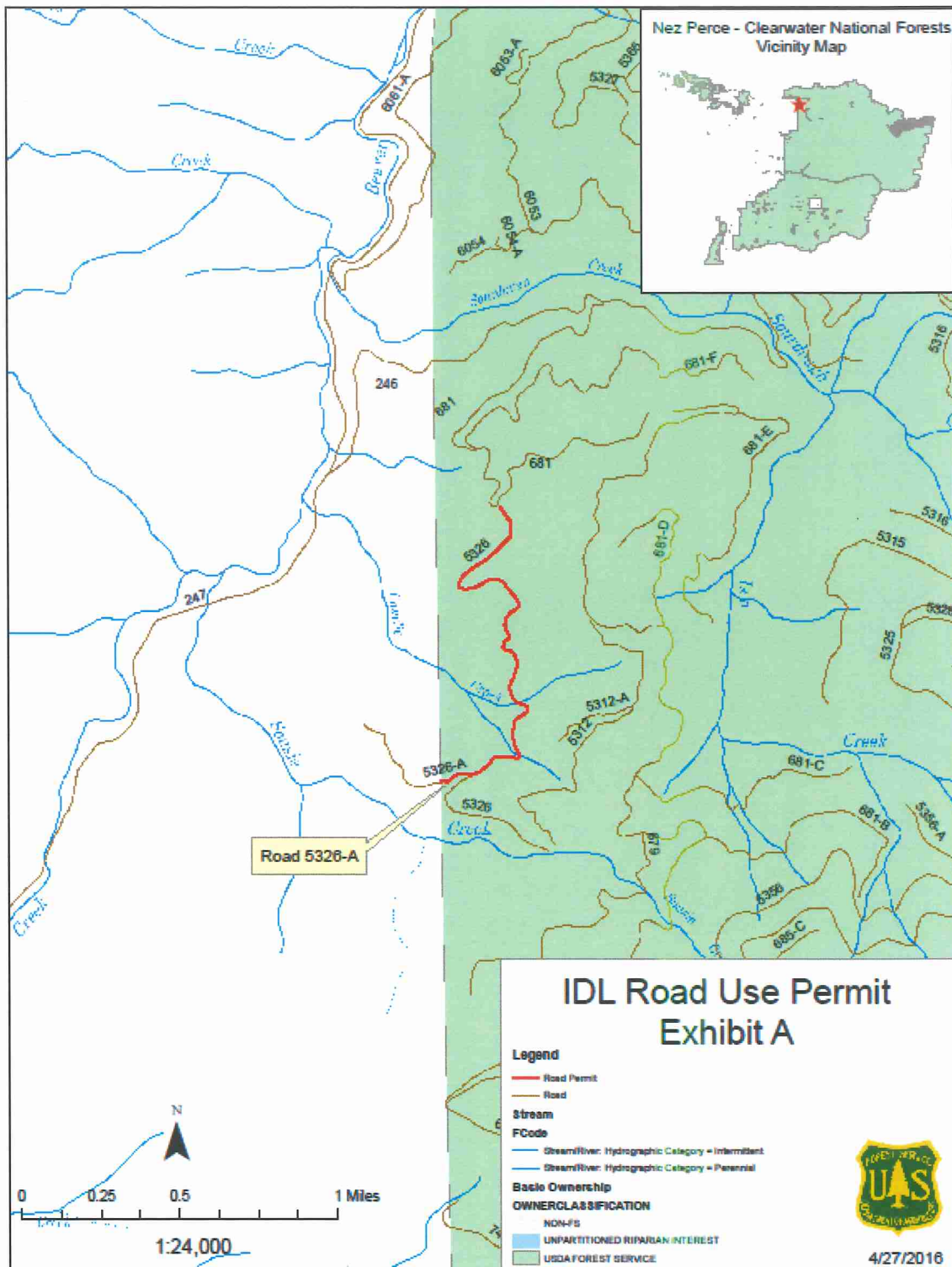
Project Design / Equipment: IDL is requesting use of NFSR 5326 and 5326-A to access State land for a timber harvest scheduled for summer 2016, with prescribed burning and tree planting to be completed after the timber harvest. A 5-year Road Use Permit would be authorized to replace the Road Use Permit that expired on December 31, 2015. The permit would allow IDL administrative and commercial use of the roads by logging trucks and support vehicles during the closure period. The roads would continue to be closed to full sized motorized vehicles.

IDL would maintain the road through roadside brush removal, culvert maintenance, ditch cleaning and road grading. Equipment such as a road grader, rubber tire backhoe and mechanical brusher would be used to accomplish road maintenance. All road maintenance activities would be required to follow Forest Service Road Maintenance Specifications and Best Management Practices, which would be included in the road use permit. NFSR 5326 and 5326-A would be inspected by Forest Service personnel periodically to ensure road conditions were being maintained per the specifications in the road use permit.

Project Implementation: Timber harvest would start as early as summer of 2016, with planting completed by winter, 2021.

Project Information: Travis Mechling, North Zone Engineer, (208) 476-8210, tmechling@fs.fed.us

Map of the NFSR 5326 and 5326-A Road Use Permit Project



7) Wildfire Tree Planting - North Fork (North Fork RD)

Proposed Category: 36 CFR 220.6(e)(11): Post-fire rehabilitation activities, not to exceed 4,200 acres (such as tree planting) to repair or improve lands unlikely to recover to a management approved condition from wildland fire damage.

Legal Coordinates of Project Sites: Township 36 North , Range 7 East, Sections 6 and 7.

Background: The proposed project is located in the Snowy Summit Wildfire area of 2015 on the North Fork Ranger District. Along with other post-fire recovery and restoration efforts, the Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forests looked for opportunities to recover the economic value, where appropriate, to offset the costs of restoration in fire-affected areas. A rapid assessment process used a coarse filter/fine filter approach to eliminate burned areas from consideration for salvage. "Coarse filters" included designated Wilderness, Idaho Roadless Rule areas, Wild and Scenic River areas, Research Natural Areas, Riparian Habitat Conservation Areas, landslide-prone areas, etc. The "Fine filter" approach then evaluated the remaining burned areas using a restoration-based framework. Among other criteria, areas of 50% or greater mortality that would not be economically feasible, due to timber not meeting merchantability standards, accessibility, etc., were dropped for proposed salvage. (The area proposed for the Wildfire Tree Planting-North Fork project met this criteria.) These areas would be restored through natural regeneration and planting native tree species where planting is needed.

Relying on natural regeneration in the proposed project area would result in stands dominated primarily by grand fir and Douglas fir, species susceptible to root disease and stem decay, and likely to have low survival rates. Western white pine, western larch and ponderosa pine are more resistant to root disease and stem decay and being shade intolerant species tend to be more fire resistant and longer lived than shade tolerant species. By planting these species, the project would help reestablish and promote the diversity of the forested component in the burned area. In turn, this would improve the overall health, structure and vigor of the stands within the larger wildfire-impacted landscape over the long term.

The project would meet the requirements of the National Forest Management Act which states that *"All forested lands in the National Forest System shall be maintained in appropriate forest cover with species of trees, degree of stocking, rate of growth, and conditions of stand designed to secure maximum benefits of multiple use sustained yield management in accordance with land management plans."*

Project Design / Equipment: The North Fork Ranger District is proposing to plant seedlings of western white pine and western larch in stands burned during the summer of 2015. Tree planting would occur in stands without timber salvage operations.

The project would plant trees on approximately 18 acres within two stands (see Table below). Tree spacing and trees per acre may vary but would be approximately 10 x 10 feet and 400 trees per acre. Forest Service personnel would evaluate the stands and design planting specifications to provide seedling protection and determine the appropriate species for site conditions. Planting would be done using a contract crew with oversight by Forest Service personnel.

Stands Proposed for Tree Planting on the North Fork RD after the 2015 Snowy Summit Wildfire

| Stand No. | Acres | Township | Range | Section | County | Watershed - Subwatershed |
|----------------|-------|----------|-------|---------|------------|---------------------------|
| 01050119080046 | 4 | 36N | 7E | 7 | Clearwater | Clearwater – French Creek |
| 01050119080015 | 14 | 36N | 7E | 6 & 7 | Idaho | Clearwater – French Creek |
| Total acres | 18 | | | | | |

All planting would be done using hand tools; no mechanical equipment would be used. There would be no other ground disturbing activities associated with the proposed action. Access to the sites would only be by existing roads. The project would not change access restrictions. During wet conditions driving full size vehicles on roads would be limited and ATVs or walking would be used to access the stands instead to minimize damage to roads.

Surveys would be conducted after the first and third growing seasons to monitor the survival and condition of the planted trees.

Project Implementation: The work would occur in the fall of 2016 or the spring and fall of 2017. Fall planting would be done in late September to early October, spring planting in late April to mid-May. The project would take approximately two weeks to complete.

Project Information: Clare Brick, Forest Culturist, 208-963-4208, cbrick@fs.fed.us.

Map for the Wildfire Tree Planting - North Fork Project

